Strong Leadership

... a clear course

✔ Three Years Later

NOVA SCOTIA

Executive Summary

The John Hamm government is the first government in Nova Scotia to openly report its progress in fulfilling the commitments it made when it came to office. It has set a new, higher standard of accountability that all future governments will be hard pressed not to follow.

This document, *Strong Leadership ... a clear course: Three Years Later*, is the third annual progress report issued by government since it assumed office on August 16, 1999.

Despite the $500-million deficit it faced when it came to office, the Hamm government has kept its commitment to focus on the priorities of Nova Scotians by increasing the funding for hospitals, schools, and roads in each and every year of its mandate. It also met its commitment to bring greater certainty to Nova Scotia's economic future by balancing the budget in the third year of its mandate—the first truly balanced budget in 40 years; two of the important commitments the government made, and kept. There are many others.

Released in the summer of 1999, *Strong Leadership ... a clear course* identified four areas that required urgent attention: health care, education, the economy, and financial accountability.

Among the government's health care commitments was the promise to base decisions on evidence; give communities a stronger voice in determining the future of health care; retain and recruit new nurses and doctors; invest in research; and promote healthy lifestyles. Concrete action has been in all of these and many more areas. District health authorities have a new clinical services planning document to help ensure that decisions are based on sound clinical practice, and a new information management system, which will help doctors and their patients make sound health care decisions, is well under way. As well, community health boards now have a legislated mandate; a new debt relief program has been established to recruit doctors to under-serviced areas; Nova Scotia has its first comprehensive strategy to retain and recruit more nurses; more than $20 million has been committed to support medical research; and a new tobacco control strategy and programs focusing on youth fitness are just two of a number of examples of how government is working to promote wellness.

Government also made significant progress in establishing a visible, consistent, and functional education system. Nova Scotia's first *Minister's Report to Parents* has been released; Nova Scotia's first provincial School Code of Conduct has been developed; a new standardized report card is in the works; and new initiatives such as Active Young Readers and Writers in Action are helping our youngest students get the solid foundation they need to continue to learn throughout their lives. These are just some of the many education commitments being fulfilled, as promised.

To create new jobs and grow our economy, government made a commitment to work closely with the business community, to begin rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, to develop a new energy plan, to modernize government procurement practices, to create a separate Department of Tourism, and to reduce red tape. Nova Scotia's new economic strategy, *Opportunities for Prosperity*, was developed following extensive consultation with Nova Scotia's business leaders, tens of millions of new dollars have been invested in roads and in upgrading Nova Scotia's water and sewer services, Nova Scotia has a new energy plan; procurement policies are more Nova Scotia–friendly; a separate Department of Tourism and Culture has been established; and the Nova Scotia Business Registry and a wide range of new on-line services are making it much easier for Nova Scotians to do business with government.

The government also promised it would use modern, transparent accounting practices; reduce the size and scope of government; get out of money-losing industries; balance the budget in year three; and provide a tax break in year four. Once again, it has either completed or is on course to deliver on of its commitments to secure Nova Scotia's fiscal position and make government more accountable to taxpayers. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) have been adopted; dozens of agencies boards and commissions have been eliminated; Sysco has been closed, and Nova Scotia Resources Limited sold; the budget is balanced; and the government's four-year fiscal plan includes provisions for future tax relief.

This report demonstrates that concrete action has been taken to respond to over 150 commitments made in the summer of 1999. Others are in various stages of development. With a full year left in its four-year plan, the Hamm Government will continue to build on efforts to secure Nova Scotia's vital social programs, to create new economic opportunities for all Nova Scotians, and as promised, to be accountable to Nova Scotians by sharing with them the progress it is making in implementing *Strong Leadership ... a clear course*.

Introduction

Since being sworn in on August 16, 1999, Premier John Hamm and the Nova Scotia government have taken an aggressive approach in implementing *Strong Leadership ... a clear course*, the plan presented to Nova Scotians in the summer of 1999.

The following is a review of many of the actions government has taken to meet the commitments it made three years ago.

Page numbers noted throughout this document refer to the original document, Strong Leadership ... a clear course.

Building a Healthier Province

"Building a responsive, outcome-based, and efficient health care system is the most urgent priority."

Commitment

Assume the existing debt of the non-designated hospitals and the regional health boards. (p. 8)

Action

✔ Assumed operating deficits and debts in October 1999 budget.

Commitment

Eliminate regional health boards and create a new structure that will give more responsibility for health care decision making to communities. The new structure, which will include the catchment areas of the nine regional hospitals, will support, rather than impede, this devolution of responsibility to communities. (p. 3 and p. 8)

Action

✔ Announced October 21, 1999, the transfer of regional health board governance from regional health boards to the Department of Health to provide stability to the health care system during the transition period.

✔ Released a transition plan on November 5, 1999, to restructure the province's health care system into one that is more community-responsive and based on nine district health authorities.

✔ Passed the Health Authorities Act, spring 2000. The Health Authorities Act came into effect January 31, 2001.

Commitment

Legislate the authority of community health boards to identify and plan programs to meet local priorities. (p. 8)

Action

✔ Provided for new, well-defined roles for community health boards through the Health Authorities Act so that boards can plan local health care priorities.

✔ Included a $1-million wellness fund in the 2001–02 budget to be used to put community health board wellness plans into effect.

Commitment

Establish the position of Nursing Policy Advisor to work with the Deputy Minister of Health. The Nursing Policy Advisor will work with the nursing profession to develop effective strategies to retain, recruit, and retrain nurses. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Hired a Nursing Policy Advisor to work with employers, educators, professional associations, unions, and the Department of Health on issues affecting the nursing profession.
- ✔ Launched the Provincial Nursing Network in April 2000.
- ✔ Developed a nurse recruitment brochure and information kit and launched a nursing recruitment website.
- ✔ Participated in numerous job fairs, including Toronto, PEI, and Newfoundland.
- ✔ Announced funding in May 2002 to pay up to 80 per cent of the costs of tuition for nurses who require training to re-enter the workforce.
- ✔ Announced in 2002 relocation allowance of up to $5,000 for out-of-province nurses who relocate to Nova Scotia.

Commitment

Work with the nursing profession to make sure their work environment is rewarding and positive, a work environment where nurses know they can properly care for their patients, where nurses know they are valued, and where nurses are empowered to influence clinical practice outcomes. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Conducted the most in-depth nursing stakeholder consultations since the Royal Commission and produced the report *Nursing in Nova Scotia: Strengthening the Foundation.*
- ✔ Announced $2 million in winter 2001 to purchase equipment such as new patient lifts. This equipment will enhance the working conditions of nurses and is part of our $15-million commitment to new medical equipment.
- ✔ Department of Health is now carrying out major research initiatives related to nursing in partnership with Dalhousie University.
- ✔ Department of Health is developing MIS data system in co-operation with the Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia to better meet human resource planning needs.
- ✔ Committed $5 million in April 2001to launch Nova Scotia's first nursing strategy. The strategy includes a $300,000 commitment to support Workforce Development and Utilization, which includes full utilization of RN/LPN scopes of practice, and a Practice Environment Collaboration Program, which includes workforce deployment such as staffing and scheduling. The strategy was prepared in co-operation with the Provincial Nursing Network, which includes nursing employers, educators, professional associations, unions, and practising nurses.

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Commitment
Provide nursing students who agree to work in Nova Scotia with bursaries covering up to 50 per cent of their tuition costs. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Provided bursaries to 75 fourth-year nursing students and 140 licensed practical nurses (LPNs) for refresher programs and pharmacy courses.
- ✔ Announced a new Co-operative Learning Experience program to provide on-the-job training. To date, 60 student nurses have received paid work terms, with 90 more in progress.
- ✔ Provided 100 nurses with relocation allowances.
- ✔ Funded 15 registered nurses for the RN re-entry program.

Commitments
Provide, as our first priority, the core funding required to establish 100 new full-time equivalent nursing positions. (p. 6)

Reverse the trend to casualize the nursing profession by properly funding full-time nursing positions. (p. 6)

Action
- ✔ Increased the percentage of nurses working full time from 53.2 per cent in 1997 to 57.1 per cent in 2001. Since 1997, (latest CIHI report) 180 more nurses are working full time in Nova Scotia.

Commitment
Immediately commit to increase the number of nurse training seats. (p. 6)

Action
- ✔ Providing funding to maintain the 75 additional nurse training seats announced in 1999, including a new satellite training site at the University College of Cape Breton.

Commitment
Support professional development opportunities that recognize the increasing complexity and specialization of nursing care and develop nurse practitioner legislation. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Released Nova Scotia's first Nursing Strategy in April 2001 and committed $5 million to fund the strategy in 2001–02, and 2002–03. The strategy supports both practising and student nurses, enhances recruitment efforts, and addresses workforce issues.

- ✔ Passed amendments to the Pharmacy Act that will allow nurse practitioners (part of the Primary Care pilot project) to prescribe routine medications.
- ✔ Included $150,000 in the 2000–01 budget for the Dalhousie University Nurse Practitioner Program. Committed to continue this funding in each of the next three years.
- ✔ Passed legislation in May 2001 to allow for nurse practitioners and to more clearly define the scope of practice of LPNs.
- ✔ Provided funding in October of 2001 to pilot the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program, which expands the role of specialty trained nurses in responding to victims of sexual assault.
- ✔ Increased funding in the 2002–03 budget ($420,000) to increase the number of nurse practitioners.
- ✔ Announced a nurse practitioner for Long and Brier Islands, July 2002.

Commitment

Provide bursaries covering 50 per cent of the cost of tuition for medical students who agree to practise in under-serviced areas of Nova Scotia. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Announced a debt assistance plan in February 2001 to attract new doctors to communities in need of physicians. The plan provides $15,000 a year, to a maximum of $45,000, to new family physicians or designated specialists who establish practices in under-serviced communities. To date, seven doctors have signed practice agreements with the government.

Commitment

Ensure that doctors, along with other health care providers, have a real voice in shaping the future direction of health care. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Included physicians and other health care professionals in the planning and operation of our four primary health care initiatives.
- ✔ Included Medical Society of Nova Scotia representatives on the Physician Resource Planning Steering Committee, which is developing a physician resource plan for Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Consulted physicians from across Nova Scotia on the Clinical Services Initiative.

Commitment
Lift the gag order imposed on doctors. (p. 7)

Action
✔ Advised the Medical Society of Nova Scotia that there are no restrictions on doctors speaking about physician-related concerns.

Commitment
Immediately request the Auditor General to provide a detailed analysis of health care spending. (p. 8)

Action
✔ Released a detailed audit report prepared by the Internal Audit Division in June 2001.

Commitment
Appoint a task force with representation from Nova Scotia's research centres, universities, and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health-related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities. (p. 9)

Action
✔ Named the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF) board of directors in November 2000. The foundation, with an annual $5-million budget, provides research and support in the areas of medicine, health outcomes, health services, and health public policy. The foundation currently co-sponsors research projects with the Canadian Institute for Innovation, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, and the Canadian Health Research Foundation.

✔ The foundation awarded 33 health research projects on July 26, 2001 and announced $800,000 for Nova Scotia students completing their masters, doctoral, and post-doctoral programs.

✔ Announced $15 million in May 2001 to create the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust Fund. This fund has the potential to help research institutions, such as the Atlantic Genome Centre, acquire up to $85 million more in research funding.

✔ Announced more than $4.5 million in NSHRF grants in July 2002, including funding to support research into diabetes and premature labour. More than 53 researchers and graduate students were awarded funding.

Commitment
Consult medical experts in approving medications under the provincial formulary (p. 9)

Action
- ✔ Establishing the Atlantic Expert Advisory Committee, made up of physicians, pharmacists, and other experts, to develop and review new pharmaceuticals for provincial drug plans.

Commitment
Establish appropriate criteria for determining the number of beds necessary to provide an adequate level of hospital and nursing home care in each community. (p. 7)

Action
- ✔ Established an ad hoc committee of stakeholders representing the continuing care sector to establish criteria for determining the number of long-term care beds.
- ✔ Identified Cape Breton and Antigonish as pilot sites for new Single Entry Access system for the continuing care sector.
- ✔ Released Clinical Services planning document in February 2001.
- ✔ Committed $1.5 million in the 2001–02 budget to expand the Single Entry Access program. This program significantly reduced wait lists for nursing homes in pilot areas.
- ✔ Announced in March 2002 new 1-800 phone service for seniors and families needing home care, adult protection, or nursing home care.
- ✔ Clinical Services planning presently examining physician services, as well as the long-term care sector.

Commitment
Immediately undertake a comprehensive assessment of all health care facilities in partnership with health care providers to ensure that Nova Scotians are receiving the right type of care in the appropriate facility. (p. 8)

Action
- ✔ Completed health facilities review.
- ✔ Completed Provincial Health Council's core services review, fall 2000.
- ✔ Released Clinical Services Planning Process in February 2001, which provides health planners with detailed information to support evidence-based decision making. Clinical services review is presently examining other aspects of the health system including the long-term care sector.

- ✔ Announced funding in the 2001–02 budget to expand the Single Entry Access system province wide.
- ✔ Made one-stop service for nursing home care, home care, and adult protection available through a new 1-800 line.

Commitment

Make public all evidenced-based requirements for change and initiate changes as soon as possible. A PC Government is committed to ensuring health care resources are directed by real, measurable evidence. (p. 6)

Action

- ✔ Released the Clinical Services Planning Document in February 2001. The document was positively received by health care professionals and administrators as a critical tool in planning acute care services based on evidence.

Commitment

Conduct a thorough audit of the cost and clinical outcomes of providing ground ambulance service in the province and seek advice to determine the government's legal obligations with respect to its contract with Emergency Medical Care. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Released in December 2001 the clinical performance and value-for-money audit conducted by the Department of Finance Corporate Internal Audit Branch in conjunction with Fitch and Associates.

Commitment

Conduct an independent review of the Environmental Health Clinic to ensure that programs and services are meeting the health needs of Nova Scotians who have environmental illness. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Released review of Environmental Health Clinic in December 2000 which identified areas for improving service to patients, including calling for better co-operation between the clinic, Dalhousie University, and Capital Health District.

Commitment

Ensure adequate funding for addiction recovery programs and introduce funding to provide in-patient support for gaming addicts. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Announced $ 1.8 million in the 2002–03 budget to help women and youth with addictions.
- ✔ Announced phase two of a study to help health care professionals enhance programs and services for problem gamblers, March 2002.

Commitment

Ensuring that the needs of physicians who move to under-serviced areas continue to receive follow-up guidance and support (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ Department of Health maintains regular contact with newly recruited physicians, paying particular attention to their first year of practice.

Commitment

Mandate the Provincial Health Council to hold province-wide public consultations to develop a list of core clinical services that must be provided at the community, regional, and provincial levels and to develop a Patient's Bill of Rights for government approval. (p. 7)

Action

- ✔ The Provincial Health Council conducted province-wide consultations at the request of Premier Hamm.
- ✔ Council released two reports in fall 2000: *Health for Nova Scotians* and *Expectations for Health and Health Care in Nova Scotia.*

Commitment

Establish a core committee of government and non-government representatives to review and oversee all aspects of the health system and to regularly comment on the potential impact of proposed policy and program changes. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Established stakeholder committee and terms of reference in October 2001.

Commitment

Dedicate a portion of the tobacco tax to fund new health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, including programs designed to discourage tobacco and other substance abuse among youth. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Established a new Youth Advisory Committee on Smoking and Youth and announced multi-year funding commitment to implement a comprehensive tobacco control strategy.
- ✔ Increased tobacco taxes three times, including a $5 per carton increase in the 2002 budget.
- ✔ Passed one of the country's most aggressive and comprehensive anti-smoking laws.

Commitment

Increase the funding for health and wellness promotion and disease prevention education and remediation initiatives by at least $1 million in each year of our mandate.

Action

- ✔ New $1-million investment provided to support community-based primary care initiatives through community health boards announced in 2001–02 budget. Other areas of enhanced support in include
  - multi-year funding to reduce tobacco consumption
  - $750,000 to continue the ICONS project (Improving Cardiovascular Outcomes in Nova Scotia)
  - 200,000 to conduct Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative
  - $50,000 for the High Five Program focusing on youth fitness and healthy lifestyles
  - funding for ground-breaking research to assess the activity levels of children and youth
  - new equipment and policies to prevent and/or test for osteoporosis.

Commitment
Support family caregivers by committing $1 million to the expansion of respite services. (p. 9)

Action
- ✔ Included an additional $500,000 in the October 1999 budget for respite services for the remaining six months of the budget year.
- ✔ Included $1 million in the 2000–01 budget to expand respite services for caregivers and maintained funding in each subsequent year.

Commitment
Undertake a comprehensive review of the delivery of mental health services, particularly as they relate to child and adolescent mental health. (p. 9)

Action
- ✔ Completed review in May 2000 and released report in June, 2000.
- ✔ Announced plans in May 2001 to blend mental health services for children and youth into one coordinated system in order to provide closer-to-home, integrated, mental health services.
- ✔ Released on May 1, 2002 a progress update on children and youth mental health, along with detailed plan for implementing phase one of the multi-year project.
- ✔ Included additional $1.5 million in 2002–03 budget to improve mental health services.

Commitment
Introduce legislation governing medical laboratory technologists. (p. 8)

Action
- ✔ Passed legislation spring 2000.

Commitment
Commit $2 million to reduce assessment wait-times for children believed to have autism or pervasive developmental delay and to provide early treatment for these children. (p. 9)

Action
- ✔ Dedicated $2 million in the 2000–01 budget to autism spectrum disorders. Announced new community-based early identification and intervention service model (EIIS) in June, 2000. Maintained increased funding in 2001–02 and 2002–03 budgets.

Commitment

Integrate Health and Community Services programs, particularly as they relate to the delivery of primary care and continuing care, so that appropriate and early interventions can be taken to prevent unnecessary costs to the system. (p. 8)

Action

- ✔ Transferred residential care facilities and community-based options that provide services to seniors to the Department of Health on April 1, 2000.
- ✔ Transferred the Adult Protection Program to the Department of Health in April 2000.
- ✔ Developed a joint working group to address issues identified in the Kendrick Report.
- ✔ Enhanced coordination of Department of Health and Department of Community Services programs by implementing Single Entry Access.
- ✔ Announced in May 2001 plans by departments of Health and Community Services to blend children and youth mental health services into one coordinated system in order to provide closer-to-home, integrated mental health services. Budget for 2002–03 includes $1.5 million to begin implementing phase one of Children and Youth Mental Health Report.

Commitment

Establish an Information and Medical Technology Advisory Committee with broad geographic representation to ensure that technology dollars are spent fairly across the province and to promote the use of new cost-effective technologies and information systems. (p. 9)

Action

- ✔ Announced $15 million for new medical equipment in February 2001, including specialized X-rays, ultrasound, CT scanners, and anaesthesia-monitoring equipment. Selected the new medical equipment based on priorities submitted by hospitals and nursing homes.
- ✔ Announced additional $15 million for new medical equipment in June 2002, including funding for new MRI scanners, bone densitometers, and X-ray equipment.
- ✔ Developed, through the Department of Health with representation from across the province, a high-level implementation plan for a hospital information system. This system will link 34 hospitals and provide patients, doctors, nurses, and administrators with easier, faster access to health information.
- ✔ Entered into a licence agreement with Meditech in May 2001 for a hospital information system. A Health Information System Steering Committee and advisory committee are guiding the project. The total cost of the project, which began in 2000–01, will be $30 million over three years.

Education, the Foundation

"A strong education system is the foundation of an economy of sustained growth. Government will dedicate itself to an education system which is adequately funded, fully focused on the student and the classroom and which will prepare young Nova Scotians to compete in the job markets of today and tomorrow."

Commitment

Immediately establish a task force with broad geographic representation that will hold public hearings on existing school board boundaries and make recommendations for amending existing school board boundaries so that they properly reflect reasonable community input. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Established a School Board Boundary Review Task Force, which held public consultations and submitted its report to government in February 2000.
- ✔ Established a new governance model for South West School Board in June 2000.
- ✔ Announced a steering committee on July 20, 2001, to guide the evaluation process of the new governance model for South West School Board. The committee consists of representatives from district school boards, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, the Association of Nova Scotia Education Administrators, and the Department of Education.
- ✔ Public consultations and an evaluation report received in March 2002 recommend that the structure adopted in 2000 be maintained with changes.

Commitment

Establish by law or regulation a uniform, province-wide standard for primary classes on the basis of five days a week. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Continues to honour the July 5, 1999, decision to offer grade primary in every school in the province.

Commitment

Ensure that resources are allocated fairly so that students across Nova Scotia have equitable access to comparable equipment, supplies, and learning aids. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Announced that government will once again finance and own schools because the P3 school construction program increased the gap between those schools that have and those that don't. Schools are now being designed and built according to modern and standard design criteria—ensuring more equitable use of education dollars.
- ✔ The Information Economy Initiative computer program is providing over 6,000 computers to secondary schools. These computers are distributed using a per capita formula to ensure equity and to provide computers to schools not included in construction projects.
- ✔ Adding more than 1,200 computers for grades 4–6 in 2002–03
- ✔ Provided more than 600,000 books to elementary students through the Active Young Readers Program—approximately 130 new books for every classroom.
- ✔ Textbooks and software resource funding is being done through a targeted per-student grant basis. The province now directs over 50 per cent of resource purchasing to ensure that priority areas are covered and they are directed to curriculum needs and maximizing bulk-purchasing benefits. In 2001–02 directed purchases included resources for science 7–8, literacy 4–6, and grade 12 math.
- ✔ Provides e-mail accounts to all students and teachers in Nova Scotia, regardless of location, through the Department of Education's centralized e-mail service. System is finally complete, providing over 69,000 e-mail accounts for students and teachers.

Commitment

Develop a multi-year plan for addressing the need for additional resources for students with special needs. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Struck a committee of stakeholders to examine Special Needs Policy in fall 2000.
- ✔ Committed an additional $3 million in the 2001–02 budget to support the needs of special needs students and maintained increased funding through 2002–03.
- ✔ Announced a partnership agreement between Nova Scotia libraries and the Canadian Institute for the Blind Library in May 2001 to make reading materials more readily available to Nova Scotians with print disabilities, including Nova Scotians who are blind or have visual impairment or physical or learning disabilities. The partnership agreement covers 75 public libraries, 12 university libraries, and 14 community college libraries.

Commitment

Establish and enforce a standard code of conduct for students and teachers that will emphasize mutual respect, responsibility, and discipline. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Struck a committee with representation from parents, students, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations to develop a code of conduct that emphasizes respect, responsibility, and self-discipline in all our schools.
- ✔ Released a draft School Code of Conduct in March 2001. The code was sent to school boards, school principals, and school advisory committees for input. Code of Conduct guidelines are presently being developed for implementation in September 2002.
- ✔ Completed training of leaders from each school board in co-operative discipline.
- ✔ Requested that the newly created Provincial Student Education Council bring forth recommendations to stop school bullying.

Commitment

Ensure that our education system reflects the diverse nature of Nova Scotia's communities. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Amended the Education Act to provide for an African Canadian seat on Nova Scotia's school boards. School Board elections held in October of 2000 resulted in designated African Canadian representation.
- ✔ Announced new resource tools for Nova Scotia's Acadian students in March 2001.
- ✔ Signed two new agreements with the federal government in May 2001 that will contribute $46.4 million for French language education in the province. The three- and four-year agreements include detailed action plans for building on existing French programs and introducing new ones.
- ✔ Developed a Racial Equity Policy.
- ✔ Expanded programs and services for the African–Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities, including early intervention, curriculum development, supplementary education, transition programs, and teacher development education.
- ✔ Working with the Mi'kmaq communities to develop language courses for grades 7–12, as well as diverse courses relating to Aboriginal history, culture, and current issues.
- ✔ Working closely with the Acadian educational institution to implement the new High School Diploma for Adults in French.

- ✔ Providing an Educational Incentive Program for African–Nova Scotian students to assist and encourage their continued participation in high school and post-secondary institutions.
- ✔ Delivering through the Community Learning Initiative (CLI) and Workplace Education Initiative (WEI) adult literacy/basic education programs designed specifically for Acadian. African–Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, and ELS students and for persons with disabilities.
- ✔ Established a working group to explore opportunities for expanding adult education programs for African Nova Scotians.
- ✔ Formed working group to develop Gaelic language courses for grades 10–12 and Gaelic Cultural Studies for grade 11.

Commitment

Establish a special Capital Improvement Fund, administered by the School Capital Construction Committee, to respond to emergency health problems in our schools. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Announced that the School Capital Construction Committee will be reinstated to replace the P3 school construction process and asked the committee to provide government with recommendations related to the most urgent priorities for school renovations.
- ✔ Allocated approximately $20 million in additional funding for school renovations in the 2000–01 budget.
- ✔ Set aside $19 million for 2001–02 to repair and upgrade schools
- ✔ Announced in July 2001 a new approach to allocating renovation dollars that will allow for bulk tendering and reduced costs. This means more schools will be repaired.
- ✔ Announced $13 million in 2002–03 for school repairs and renovations, bringing to over $89 million the total amount to be spent in 2002–03 on new schools, schools under construction, and renovations.
- ✔ Put in place funding and support that provides testing equipment with focus on prevention.

Commitment

Establish a long-term funding basis for our schools. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Education Consultative Forum, a group consisting of the Deputy Minister of Education and all school board superintendents, has directed the Education Funding Committee to examine and recommend a new funding formula.

Commitment

Establish a visible, consistent, and functional education system based on the most appropriate international standards and use these standards to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workforce. (p. 15)

Action

- ✔ Increased funding to Nova Scotia school boards in the 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 budgets.
- ✔ Launched the Active Young Readers Program in 2000 for students from grades P–3 and expanded the program in 2001–02 to cover all elementary grade levels.
- ✔ Made commitment to test the literacy levels of all grade 6 students and, for the first time, to share the results with the parents of all children and with teachers at the junior high level.
- ✔ Included an additional $4.2 million in the 2000–01 budget to expand the number of seats at the Nova Scotia Community College and its virtual campus. Announced additional increase of $4 million in NSCC budget in 2002–03, along with an additional $1 million to identify opportunities for NSCC to expand program areas.
- ✔ Committed $1.5 million in the 2001–02 budget to launch the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, which coordinates programs that help adults get their high school diploma. First students of Adult School of Learning graduated in June 2002.
- ✔ Launched Writers in Action in January 2002, a new program to support student grammar, writing, and speaking skills.
- ✔ Announced eight schools would take part in new pilot program to help create more effective schools in April 2002.
- ✔ Announced in January 2002 the first in a series of provincial agreements between the Nova Scotia Community College and the Department of Education that support transition from high school to post-secondary e ducation at the college.
- ✔ Launched Pictou-Antigonish Virtual Public Library in January 2002, providing on-line access to library resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere in Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Released first Minister's Report to Parents in March 2002, outlining recent provincial, national, and international test results, as well as the government's efforts to address areas that will improve Nova Scotia's results.
- ✔ Announced in January 2002 a process that will result in a consistent approach for reporting on student learning. A committee established to recommend a provincial report card policy will consider the use of numeric of letter grades, additional commentary from teachers, and the frequency of reporting.
- ✔ First cycle of the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) completed in spring 2000.

- ✔ Implemented national School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) assessment standards in reading, writing, math, and science.
- ✔ Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) implemented and ongoing.
- ✔ Released first Skills Nova Scotia framework for public input July 2002. The framework outlines the challenges and next steps for business, labour, and educators in developing a knowledgeable and skilled workforce for the future.

Commitment

Work to expand opportunities that enable transition for pre-graduate high school students who wish to pursue vocational trades. (p. 17)

Action

- ✔ The Nova Scotia Community College has negotiated Memorandum of Understanding with all school boards to implement pre-college training programs starting at grade 11.
- ✔ Youth Pathways and Transitions Strategy provides increased support for students in educational and career planning. The strategy connects high school courses to specific programs at NSCC.
- ✔ Established in January 2002 the first formal articulation agreement between the Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Community College linking high school credit courses with certificate and diploma programs.
- ✔ Developed a new support document Increasing Learning Success and revised the document Senior High Schools: Comprehensive Programming and Services.

Commitment

Track employment opportunities and provide information to guidance counselors in a timely way. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Launched Nova Scotia's work information website in May 2000. This is a valuable clearinghouse of labour market information for teachers, guidance counselors, human resource personnel, and others.
- ✔ Developed the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program, which is being piloted in 100 schools. This program is designed to ensure that guidance counsellors have the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively support students in making career decisions.

Commitment

Adapting community college timetables to attract students who work during the day or whose jobs involve shift work. (P 13)

Action

- ✔ Increased funding to expand Nova Scotia Community College Virtual Campus, a web-based delivery system that allows for flexible access in terms of time and location.
- ✔ Developed new apprenticeship trades programs for Internet delivery.
- ✔ Providing network linkages to enhance the foundations of the digital and knowledge economies through high-speed access to university and community college sites.

Commitment

Encourage companies doing business with government to participate in co-operative education and school-to-work programs. (p. 13)

Action

- ✔ Established the Energy Training Program for students to encourage the private sector to hire post-secondary students for summer and co-op work terms.
- ✔ Developing partnership protocols with employers and service organizations to ensure adequate and relevant co-op education programs, school-to-work transitions and work experience placement.

Commitment

Establish a provincial income tax relief program for graduating students with high debt loads. (p. 17)

Action

- ✔ Announced in 2002–03 budget a debt-relief program would be announced within 12 months. Departments of Education and Finance are currently developing the program.

Commitment

Introduce reliable and fair evaluation and reporting systems to provide parents with accurate and regular information about their child's progress. (p. 4)

Action

- ✔ Announced literacy testing for grade 6 and that for the first time the results would be shared with parents.
- ✔ Released first annual Minister's Report to Parents in March 2002. This report includes the results of Nova Scotian students in provincial, national, and international assessments in the area of mathematics, science, and language arts.
- ✔ Established a committee to develop provincial student reporting guidelines and a standard report card. Committee will be making recommendations with respect to letter of numeric grades, frequency of reporting, and additional teacher commentary.

Commitment

Working with universities, community colleges, and the private sector to develop co-operative work experience programs. (p. 17)

Action

- ✔ Expanding co-operative education programs is a key element of the Youth Pathways and Transition strategy. Community-based Education Policy Guidelines, designed to expand co-operative work terms, implemented in September 2000.
- ✔ Co-operative education courses may now be offered at grades 10, 11, and 12 as full- or half-credit options.

Commitment

Establish, in consultation with business and labour, a comprehensive and modern apprenticeship program. (p. 17)

Action

- ✔ Announced July 20, 2001, that the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and Apprenticeship Training Division would hold public consultations to receive public and industry input on revisions to the Apprenticeship Training Act and Regulations.
- ✔ Released Apprenticeship in Nova Scotia: A Discussion Paper in March 2002. Public consultations were held to identify changes for improving Nova Scotia's apprenticeship program.

Commitment

Create a Jobs Opportunity Bureau with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges, and the public school system. The bureau's mandate is to measure the effectiveness of youth strategies, forecast future labour market requirements, and maintain an interactive website to keep young Nova Scotians apprised of the latest training and employment opportunities. (p. 13)

Action

- ✔ Launched a work information website May 2000.
- ✔ Launched a new Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat website targeted directly to youth in spring 2001. The site, developed and designed with the help of Nova Scotia youth, provides information related to education, training, employment, career counselling, and youth participation.
- ✔ Established an interdepartmental Labour Market Information Committee to address labour market information needs within the province. A federal-provincial committee is also in place to ensure that activities are coordinated and to examine opportunities for joint initiatives.
- ✔ Released the Skills Nova Scotia Framework for public input July 2002. The framework identifies a comprehensive approach for addressing skills gaps and for ensuring that Nova Scotians are better positioned to meet existing and new labour market demands.

Commitment

Ensure that all teachers are given the professional development opportunities they need to effectively implement curriculum changes and new teaching methodology and technology. (p. 16)

Action

- ✔ Developed a framework to ensure professional development funding is tied to curriculum.
- ✔ Announced changes to teacher certification in fall 2000 that requires 100 hours of professional development training during each five-year period. Professional development provisions will be reviewed after three years to ensure they are achieving effective results.
- ✔ Identified and funded professional development for priority areas tied to new initiatives such as Active Young Readers, Writers in Action, and Math Matters strategy. For example, 310 principals and over 4,000 teachers have participated in professional development opportunities for the Active Young Readers Program alone. In May 2002, almost 900 math teachers received training to become math leaders—the largest-scale professional development opportunity ever offered for math teachers.

Commitment
Ensuring adequate access to youth support services, such as social workers and public and mental health professionals. (p. 16)

Action
- ✔ Released Children and Youth Mental Health Project to stakeholders in May 2002. The Department of Education is actively involved in the development of the Phase 1 report, which outlines plans for improving mental health services at the school and community levels.

Commitment
Negotiate with the federal government to adopt the fair and equitable policy of having federal funding follow the student to the province in which the student chooses to study. (p. 17)

Action
- ✔ Department of Education and Finance officials continue to urge the federal government to amend its funding formula.

Commitment
Establishing a P–12 Provincial Education Council, including representatives named by organizations such as the Nova Scotia Home and School Association and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. (p. 15)

Action
- ✔ Announced new Provincial Student Education Council in October 2002. The council will give high school students a forum for sharing their concerns and ideas for public education directly with the government.
- ✔ Established a Provincial Education Partners Forum, which includes representatives from Nova Scotia Home and School Association, Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and Nova Scotia School Boards Association, to provide opportunity for stakeholders to consult and provide advice directly to the Department of Education.

Commitment
Double the existing Civil Service Career Start Program to provide graduating university students with opportunities for work experience within the provincial government. (p. 17)

Action
- ✔ Doubled the number of participating students, effective 2000–01 fiscal year.

Rebuilding Our Economy

"It is government's role to establish an economic and regulatory environment that encourages the private sector and facilitates economic growth and job creation. We believe that Nova Scotians are looking for long-term employment opportunities that will enable them to enjoy Nova Scotia's quality of life. We believe that these can and should best be provided by the private sector. We believe that it is the role of government to put in place programs and to create an environment that encourages and supports Nova Scotian entrepreneurs."

Commitment

Streamline the Department of Economic Development so it focuses on infrastructure, training, and marketing, rather than on simply passing out grants, loans, and loan guarantees. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Released the Economic Growth Strategy, *Opportunities for Prosperity*, in October 2000, which focuses on three elements (infrastructure, training, and marketing) as outlined in *Strong Leadership ... a clear course*.
- ✔ Released a made-in-Nova Scotia investment framework and regulations in November 2001.
- ✔ A new Crown corporation, Nova Scotia Business Inc., is making day-to-day business decisions based on solid business analysis, taking over many of the responsibilities of the former Department of Economic Development.
- ✔ Investment decisions are primarily driven by companies achieving job performance targets, ensuring that taxpayer investments are secured.

Commitment

Convene public Economic Round Table sessions with Cabinet and business, labour, municipal, community, and educational leaders to identify priority issues and develop co-operative strategies to achieve sustained economic growth. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Held over 100 public meetings across the province to develop *Opportunities for Prosperity*, Nova Scotia's first economic growth strategy in a decade.

Commitment

Make Nova Scotia the most attractive place to do business in Atlantic Canada by guaranteeing that the costs imposed by government are the lowest in the region. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Created a new Business Climate Division of Economic Development with a mandate to aggressively promote business climate improvement and report on progress in annual publications.
- ✔ Released in July 2002 Nova Scotia's first Business Climate Index (BCI) report card, which monitors and reports on Nova Scotia's competitiveness. The first annual report card examines 39 business climate indicators and ranks Nova Scotia fourth in Canada as a place to do business.
- ✔ Developed a made-in-Nova Scotia framework for attracting investment.
- ✔ Identified tax relief in Nova Scotia's four-year fiscal plan.

Commitment

Establish clear criteria for the Nova Scotia Community Economic Development Fund, including funding levels from the economic development budget and initiating Community Development Bonds with special emphasis on areas of high unemployment. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Projects that secure substantial levels of investment that might have otherwise left the province have been approved. These projects are evidence of substantial growth in and local support for Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIF) within the province, particularly in rural Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Review has begun of how community bonds are used in other jurisdictions, and discussions are under way with the Municipal Finance Corporation regarding proof of concept projects.

Commitment

Allow Regional Development Authorities the option of owning provincial industrial parks, malls, and associated infrastructure, giving them the authority to sell land to potential business. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ The Region of Queens Municipality recently purchased the undeveloped lands in the Liverpool Industrial Park at market value.

Commitment

Transfer resources and decision-making authority from the provincial level to broadly representative Regional Development Agencies. (p. 17)

Action

✔ Announced $1.6 million in provincial funding in May 2002 to support Regional Development Authorities in their efforts to identify new opportunities for growing their local economies, with a commitment to continue funding over the next five years.

Commitment

Amend Nova Scotia's tendering policies to ensure they offer Nova Scotia companies the same competitive advantage that other Atlantic Canadian provinces offer companies in their respective jurisdictions. (p. 12)

Action

✔ Amended tendering policies in December 2000 to include a preference for Nova Scotian suppliers where trade agreements permit. If a jurisdiction gives preference to its suppliers, or handicaps Nova Scotian suppliers, tenders from that province will be treated in like manner through the Nova Scotia government tendering process. The changes also include expanded enforcement of interprovincial reciprocity agreements.

✔ Developed an on-line suppliers list to ensure that Nova Scotian companies have faster, easier access to tender calls.

✔ Announced in July 2002 a new on-line tendering system for highway work.

Commitment

Work with communities to ensure that highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth and to ensure that planning is done on a non-partisan basis. (p. 12)

Action

✔ Completed phase one of a study that examines the link between highways and economic growth in Nova Scotia. Held consultations with key Nova Scotia business and industry leaders as well as regional development authorities. Phase two of the report, a review of highway performance standards and practices typically associated with greater economic returns, such as the elements of a strategic network of highways, is currently under way.

Commitment

Act as a facilitator with business and communities regarding joint transportation initiatives. (p. 26)

Action

✔ Completed a strategy for coordinating transportation initiatives through Voluntary Planning in December 1999. Many of the items identified in the strategy that involve Transportation and Public Works are in the works, including a new advertising signage policy.

Commitment

Aggressively claim Nova Scotia's jurisdictional control over the Laurentian Sub-basin as noted in the 1984 Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Accord. (p. 13)

Action

✔ Secured the legal services of Yves Fortier, one of the world's leading experts in international law, to present Nova Scotia's case before the panel hearing the case. In April 2002 the Arbitration Panel redefined the boundary line, rejecting the claims of both provinces, providing Newfoundland with a greater share of the sub-basin.

Commitment

Appoint a task force with representatives from Nova Scotia's research centres, universities, and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health-related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities. (p. 13)

Action

✔ Launched the Nova Scotia Research Trust Fund in May 2001, providing $15 million to help Nova Scotia's research institutions, including health and life sciences research institutions, secure further research funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. An administrative body comprising all of Nova Scotia's university and college presidents and three government representatives manages the fund.

✔ The Life Sciences Development Association was launched in May 2002. This multi-stakeholder group which includes representatives from government, research institutions, the education and health care sectors, and private enterprise provides for an integrated, collaborative approach to building a prosperous life sciences industry.

✔ Announced the province would contribute $1.25 million toward construction of a facility to house a cutting-edge MRI machine for the new Brain Repair Centre. This is a significant initiative that is expected to attract medical researchers to Nova Scotia.

Commitment

Establish a Buy Nova Scotia First program, an aggressive multimedia marketing campaign to increase consumer awareness of Nova Scotian products and services. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Working with the private sector and community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive Web portal that will bring together the province's marketing resources. Through this one website, searchers will be linked to many other websites including those about export development and e-commerce.
- ✔ Launched new web-site to promote U-pick and U-fish operations in Nova Scotia
- ✔ Developed a number of new initiatives through the Nova Scotia Business Opportunities Initiative, including a new procurement policy, supplier outreach program, and joint procurement efforts with IGA and ACOA. Also hired industrial benefits and supplier development officers to promote Nova Scotian products.
- ✔ Developing and implementing strategies focused on increasing export sales opportunities for cultural productions in design, new media, music and sound recording, production crafts, and publishing.
- ✔ Announced in July 2002 a new specialized in-store marketing program to support Nova Scotia's beverage alcohol farm and cottage industry.

Commitment

As part of the Buy Nova Scotia First program, actively promote Nova Scotia's arts and craft industry as an integral and important sector of our economy. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ The Web portal being developed will be used to promote and sell Nova Scotian products, particularly crafts, on line.
- ✔ Contributed to new initiative spearheaded by the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design that is designed to expand export markets for Cape Breton craftspeople.

Commitment

Implement legislation already introduced by the PC caucus to reduce job-killing red tape by appointing a full-time regulatory review officer with a mandate to report annually to the Legislature with recommendations for reducing bureaucratic obstacles to job creation. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Announced regulatory changes to the Electronic Filing Act in January 2000. The changes make it easier for business to interact with government by reducing paper work and the number of forms and procedures business must go through to interact with government.
- ✔ Introduced the Electronic Commerce Act in October 2000 to recognize the legal validity of electronic transactions and make it easier to do business on line.
- ✔ Launched the Nova Scotia Business Registry in 2000, which is recognized as the country's most innovative and cost-effective approach for providing service to business.
- ✔ Announced a Red Tape Reduction Task Force on May 11, 2000. The task force held public meetings throughout Nova Scotia in September and released an interim report in November. A second report that outlined progress in implementing the Task Force recommendations was released in October 2001.
- ✔ Announced new regulations in December 2000 that simplify the way pre-accident earnings are reported to the Worker's Compensation Board, thereby reducing the paper burden for employers.
- ✔ Committed funds in the 2001–02 and 2002–03 budgets to expand on-line services to business through the Nova Scotia Business Registry.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in spring 2001 to launch Registry 2000, creating a modern electronic land registry.
- ✔ Announced in June 2001 that Nova Scotia, along with New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador, had approved in principle a plan to establish uniform trucking legislation. A plan to study key elements and potential partnerships was subsequently announced in June 2002. Uniform trucking regulations will reduce interprovincial trade barriers and help spur economic development throughout the Atlantic region.
- ✔ Eliminated redundant agencies through amendments to the Agriculture and Fisheries Act, November 2001.
- ✔ New services now available on line include Registry of Motor Vehicle renewals, student loan applications, Alcohol and Gaming Authority applications, property records, and government tenders.

Commitment

Aggressively market new initiatives that demonstrate that industrial Cape Breton is much more economically diverse than many believe. (p. 14)

Action

- ✔ Established funding to support new marketing initiatives for Cape Breton.
- ✔ Committed $12 million to the Cape Breton Growth Fund, which has been used to provide payroll rebates to new companies locating on the Island such as EDS and Stream.
- ✔ Collaborating with working group of Cape Breton stakeholder agencies, including Enterprise Cape Breton (ECBC), to identify and implement new marketing efforts.

Commitment

Provide a more focused and sustained effort in marketing Cape Breton as a first-class, year-round tourism destination. (p. 14)

Action

- ✔ Expanded the season for the Port Hastings Visitor Information Centre to open in March and close in December. Previously, it opened in May and closed in October.
- ✔ Hired a tourism development officer for industrial Cape Breton.

Commitment

Implement policies and measures such as tax incentives that recognize and respond to the need for stimulating the economies of rural Nova Scotia. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Increased the Film Industry Tax Credit to 35 per cent in rural Nova Scotia from 32.5 per cent.
- ✔ Established a $1.5-million revolving loan fund to help Nova Scotia's boatbuilding industry expand into the pleasure craft business.
- ✔ Included an additional $250,000 in the 2000–01 budget to help market cultural strengths and a further $400,000 in the 2001–02 budget for new cultural partnerships that will generate increased export sales of cultural products.
- ✔ Extended the tax credit for investing in Community Economic Development Investment Funds to December 31, 2003.
- ✔ Announced in June 2002 that the funding agreement to support development, promotion, and training for the province's boatbuilding industry has been extended to March 31, 2004.
- ✔ Contributing $12 million through the Cape Breton Growth Fund to help diversify and strengthen the Cape Breton economy.

Commitment

Work with the business community to establish clear and binding principles and policies when offering incentives to attract new business and jobs or to support the expansion of existing successful business. (p. 11)

Action

- ✔ Prepared Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy, *Opportunities for Prosperity*, after extensive consultation with business leaders and representatives.
- ✔ Passed legislation creating Nova Scotia Business Inc. in fall 2000 to make day-to-day investment decisions on behalf of government.

Commitment

Aggressively market Nova Scotia's products abroad. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Led numerous trade missions that have helped secure millions of dollars in new contracts for Nova Scotia companies. The Government of Nova Scotia has participated in numerous trade missions, including missions to China, Germany, Japan, Washington, New England, New York, Boston, and Atlanta.
- ✔ Promoted the Port of Halifax to an audience of shipping executives in New York.
- ✔ Promoted Nova Scotia's oil and gas industry during oil and gas conferences in Houston, Texas.

Commitment

Vigorously promote Nova Scotia as a film, video, and multimedia production location, with tax credits and policies that are comparable to those in other jurisdictions, and remove the asset cap placed on the tax credit. (p. 12)

Action

- ✔ Removed asset cap on tax credits. Increased tax credit in rural Nova Scotia to 35 per cent from 32.5 per cent. Reduced the tax credit in metro Halifax to 30 per cent from 32.5 per cent.

Commitment

Actively work to ensure that all parts of Nova Scotia benefit from offshore gas and oil exploration and development by establishing an Energy Council of experts to advise Cabinet on the development of Nova Scotia's Offshore. (p. 13)

Action

- ✔ Announced the framework and membership of the Energy Council in June 2000.

Commitment

Establish a comprehensive energy policy that includes all domestic energy sources and reduces our dependence on imported oil. Our energy policy's central priority will be to ensure province-wide economic development at the lowest possible cost to consumers and business. (p. 20)

Action

- ✔ Released a discussion paper, *Powering Nova Scotia's Economy*, in winter 2001 to be used to develop a new energy strategy for Nova Scotia. The discussion paper outlined the values, principles, and goals for Nova Scotia's energy sector and asked Nova Scotians for their input.
- ✔ Announced in May 2001 that the Government of Nova Scotia would host a major energy forum that will include regional, national, and international experts in energy matters as part of the process to develop a new energy strategy for the province.
- ✔ Held the Energy Forum in June 2001, bringing together international experts on energy matters.
- ✔ Released *Seizing the Opportunity*, the province's first energy strategy in over a decade, in December 2001. The strategy, which called for a new Department of Energy, identified a number of opportunities for Nova Scotia to gain maximum benefits from its energy resources.
- ✔ Passed the Gas Distribution Act in spring 2002, ensuring that gas distribution in Nova Scotia is carried out on a commercial basis, as outlined in the Energy Strategy.
- ✔ Announced an advisory committee on new electricity market rules will work to introduce competition into the electricity marketplace, as outlined in the new Energy Strategy.
- ✔ Appointed a new Energy Minister in June and a new Deputy Minister of Energy in July.

Commitment

Insist that the federal government complete long-awaited upgrades to the Halifax International Airport. (p. 26)

Action

- ✔ Halifax International Airport Authority assumed control of the airport in February 2000 after the federal government announced funding upgrades.

Commitment
Ensure that all mining regulations are clear, efficient, and effective regarding safety and environmental practices, monitoring, assessments, permitting, inspection, and enforcement. (p. 29)

Action
- ✔ Passed the Mineral Resources Act in November 1999.

Commitment
Ensure that the federal government clearly defines who is eligible to participate in the native food fishery. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ The Premier and Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs and Agriculture and Fisheries and have repeatedly urged the federal government to promptly introduce an action plan for a regulated fishery that is fair to native and non-native fishermen.
- ✔ Signed an umbrella agreement in June 2002 with 13 chiefs and the federal government to negotiate treaty and related issues, including native fisheries issues.
- ✔ Enhanced efforts to curb illegal fishing.

Commitment
Immediately meet with representatives of Nova Scotia 's fishing sector to establish a more effective joint process for advocating on behalf of the industry with the Government of Canada. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Announced government's support of principles adopted by the Atlantic Fishermen's Alliance in fall 1999, following a meeting with fish harvesting and processing groups. These principles assert that conservation must be the first priority of fisheries management and that there must be only one fish management authority—the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- ✔ Invited Nova Scotia fishing interests in April 2001 to participate in a review of the Fish Processors and Fish Buyers Licensing Policy.
- ✔ A forum of industry and departmental representatives now meets twice a year to discuss issues of common concern to the industry.

Commitment
Aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to Ottawa. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Signed a new agreement with the Government of Canada and all provinces on inter-jurisdictional co-operation.

Commitment
Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing by strengthening fisheries enforcement efforts. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Allocated an additional $125,000 in the 2001–02 budget for fisheries enforcement.
- ✔ Signed a new federal-provincial memorandum of understanding in June 2002 to strengthen efforts to curb the illegal lobster trade. It will require all seafood buyers, processors, and harvesters to meet their record-keeping obligations under the federal Income Tax and Excise Tax acts and Nova Scotia's Fisheries Act.

Commitment
Enact the provisions of the Forests Act. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Proclaimed amendments to the Forests Act in April 2000.

Commitment
Undertake a comprehensive review of the current state of our forests to ensure we have a reliable understanding of the impact of recent harvesting practices on the future sustainability of our forests. (p. 28)

Action
- ✔ Announced in April 2000 that an analysis of Nova Scotia's wood supply shows current harvesting levels on small privately operated woodlands are not sustainable.
- ✔ Announced new Forest Sustainability regulations that will increase silviculture on private woodlands from $3 million to $9 million per year.
- ✔ Signed an agreement with the Association of Sustainable Forestry in April 2001 to carry out a silviculture pilot project on small private woodlands.
- ✔ Announced on July 11, 2001, that government would establish a Crown land silviculture fund to help ensure that harvest levels on Crown lands are sustainable.

Commitment
Commit to publish buyer registration information annually. (p. 29)

Action
- ✔ All registered buyers who acquire more than 5000 cubic metres of primary forests products in a year must submit an annual wood acquisition plan under regulations to the Forests Act.

Commitment
Legislate the right to hunt and fish in Nova Scotia with a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act. (p. 21)

Action
✔ Amended the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act in January 2002, enshrining heritage hunting and fishing in law.

Commitment
Immediately review the Nova Scotia Forestry and Wildlife Guidelines (p. 28)

Action
✔ Passed regulations to ensure the sustainability of woodland diversity, water quality, and wildlife habitat on all lands in forest production in November 2001.

Commitment
Insist that the Government of Canada provide drought assistance to Nova Scotia farmers in accordance with the needs of Nova Scotia farmers. (p. 27)

Action
✔ Premier Hamm urged all premiers at the Annual Premier's Conference in Quebec City in 1999 to unanimously endorse the province's position that the federal government must co-operate with the provinces to improve access to federal disaster relief.

✔ Increased funding for farm income support in Nova Scotia to historically unprecedented levels through safety nets and the Weather Related Loss Program. At no time in the past has the province played a more sizeable role in direct farm income support.

✔ Signed an agreement to develop a new national agriculture policy that, among other objectives, would improve farmers' ability to manage the inherent risks of farming (Federal-Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture Conference, June 2001).

✔ At the Annual Premier's Conference in August 2001, Premier Hamm called for a detailed report of what steps could be taken to support farmers in the future.

Commitment
Establish a New Farm Entrants Program to encourage young Nova Scotians to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia, through low-interest loans. (p. 27)

Action
- ✔ Provided $600,000 in the 2000–01 budget for the New Farm Entrants Program, administered through the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board.

Commitment
Strengthen the partnership between the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Marketing and together develop programs to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector. (p. 27)

Action
- ✔ Tabled Bill 10, the Farm Practices Act, on October 27, 1999, the need for which was identified by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture. Invited public input until early 2000. Passed the Farm Practices Act, spring 2000.
- ✔ Introduced two bills in fall 2000 that were widely supported by the Federation of Agriculture: the Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act and the Dairy Industry Act.
- ✔ Allocated $2.2 million in the 2001–02 budget to provide agricultural specialist services through new Agriculture Development Institute, an industry-led and -controlled agency.
- ✔ Held an outlook conference in March 2001 to identify future priorities of the industry.
- ✔ Signed a new national agreement in July 2001 to support Nova Scotia chicken producers. The agreement will bring all provinces under a single, market-responsive and national supply-management system.

Commitment
Maintain the Farm Loan Board as a separate entity. (p. 27)

Action
- ✔ Farm Loan Board continues to be operated as a separate entity.

Commitment
Reinstate the veterinary farm subsidy for large farm animals to ensure the viability of veterinary farm services and a healthy animal farm industry. (p. 27)

Action
✔ Agreed, following consultation with the Veterinary Association, to redirect funding earmarked for farm subsidy into expenses that more appropriately reflect travel costs.

Commitment
Re-establish the Department of Tourism and Culture as a separate department of government whose mandate includes promotion of museums, parks, and historic homes. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Established the Department of Tourism and Culture as a separate department to identify growth opportunities in these two key industries.

Commitment
Strengthen the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council to ensure it includes the key participants in our tourism sector. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Expanded the Tourism Partnership Council in January 2001 by appointing six new members. An industry-led selection committee reviewed and recommended the appointees following a public call for applications. The appointments provide more diverse industry representation on the council.

Commitment
Develop, in partnership with the tourism sector, themes and programs for marketing Nova Scotia as a year-round tourism destination. (p. 15)

Action
✔ Began an aggressive marketing and promotional campaign to promote travel to the province between January and April. The new campaign includes television, print, and radio advertising, along with information on Nova Scotia's website.
✔ The Tourism Partnership Council announced a new spring campaign in May 2001 as part of its long-term strategy to promote year-round tourism in the province.
✔ Announced in May 2001 that Nova Scotia's Visitor Information Centres would be open longer.

- ✔ Sponsored regional marketing workshops in partnership with the Tourism Industry Association. These workshops were designed to help tourism operators market and package their products and services.
- ✔ Launched a winter tourism campaign, November 2001

Commitment
Commit to no more toll highways. (p. 25)

Action
- ✔ Advised the federal transport minister in writing that Nova Scotia supports a ban on future toll highways.

Commitment
Demand that the federal government return a significant portion of the roughly $140 million in fuel taxes it collects annually in Nova Scotia as a contribution to our highway strategy. (p. 26)

Action
- ✔ Premier John Hamm joined with his colleagues at both the Annual Premiers' Conference and the Council of Maritime Premiers to unanimously endorse a national infrastructure program, with emphasis on highway improvements. The low return by Ottawa on federal fuel taxes is always highlighted.
- ✔ Made numerous requests through letters and ministerial meetings for the Government of Canada to return a greater portion of the taxes it takes from Nova Scotians each year.
- ✔ Premier Hamm has raised the need for Ottawa to become a real partner in rebuilding Canada's transportation infrastructure each year during the Annual Premier's Conferences.

Commitment
Develop a 10-year plan for completion of 100-series highways upgrading and twinning. (p. 25)

Action
- ✔ Released a 10-year needs assessment study in May 2001 that identified a $3.4-billion infrastructure deficit. Used the study to reiterate the need for a new cost-sharing agreement with the federal government.

Commitment

Dedicate all taxes raised through motor vehicle licensing and fuel sales to highway construction and maintenance to provide a solid base for highway spending. This funding may be increased depending on public need and available revenues. (p. 26)

Action

✔ Increased funding for roads and highways in each year of its mandate. Recent budget increased capital spending on roads, highways and bridges for third consecutive year, bringing the total capital budget to over $85 million—$32 million more than was spent the previous year.

Commitment

Work with municipalities and the federal government to fund essential infrastructure projects such as water and sewer services. (p. 21)

Action

✔ Premier John Hamm highlighted the need for a new national infrastructure program at the Annual Premiers' Conference in Quebec City in August 1999. His position was endorsed unanimously by all premiers and territorial leaders.

✔ Signed a six-year $196 million infrastructure agreement with the federal government in October 2000. The agreement includes funding for upgrades to municipal water and sewer services. Other initiatives to be funded under the agreement include local transportation, cultural and recreational facilities, rural and remote telecommunications, high-speed Internet access for public institutions, and affordable housing.

Building Better, More Efficient, and More Accountable Government

"Government will live within its means. By spending responsibly, we will protect our ability to guarantee priorities like health care and education for the future."

Commitment
Balanced budget by year three. (p. 3)

Action
✔ First balanced budget in 40 years tabled in the Legislature in April 2002.

Commitment
Eliminate deficit financing and restore fiscal openness by keeping one set of books. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Released consolidated financial statements for the 1998–99 fiscal year on September 27, 1999, which are consistent with new, modern and generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
✔ Reconfirmed the use of GAAP for all future fiscal years in the October 1999 budget.
✔ Reaffirmed government's commitment to improving financial accountability in subsequent budgets through amendments to the Financial Measures Act, including measures to ensure greater financial accountability on the part of third-party agencies.

Commitment
Implement legislation requiring all new program costs to be approved from identified departmental budgets. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Implemented on June 8, 2000, when the Financial Measures Act became law.

Commitment
Repatriate the debts owed to foreign lenders. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Reduced foreign exchange exposure from 51 to 29 per cent since assuming office.

Commitment
No more tax dollars for Sysco. (p. 3)

Action
✔ Sysco has been closed and the site is being cleaned up.

Commitment
Conduct a thorough, open cost-benefit analysis of the decision to withdraw from Atlantic Lotto to ensure that it is in the best interests of Nova Scotians. (p. 19)

Action
✔ Renegotiated a new and far-better deal for Nova Scotia and signed a new partnership agreement with the Atlantic provinces that will see Nova Scotia remain within Atlantic Lotto.

Commitment
Establish practical targets for reducing the provincial debt. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Released in April 2002 *A Balanced Approach to Surplus and Debt Management*, which highlights the need to reduce the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Debt- to-ratio is expected to continue to drop and be reduced from 46 to 41.7 over the next four years.

Commitment
Undertake a comprehensive review and cost-benefit analysis of the P3 process and contracts to ensure that only the best possible approach is used in school construction, renovation, and operation. (p. 5 and p. 16)

Action
✔ Completed P3 review. Announced that government will not proceed with the P3 model for future school construction because of cost overruns and more modern accounting policies that do not favour private ownership of our schools.
✔ Announced new design standards for school construction and a more cost-effective process for determining site selection.

Commitment

Amend the Freedom of Information Act to appoint the FOIPOP Review Officer on a full-time basis and to require full disclosure of public-private partnering agreements, including school construction. (p. 5 and p. 19)

Action

✔ Amended the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in November 1999.

Commitment

Together with volunteer fire departments and other non-profit community organizations review the ipact of gaming regulations on community groups. (p. 18)

Action

✔ Held consultations with volunteer fire departments, service clubs, community rinks, Royal Canadian legions, and churches during 2001–02. The scope of the discussions covered a review of regulations for bingo, lottery permits, and licences; the Red Tape Reduction Task Force Report; and consultations with officials of the Alcohol and Gaming Authority. Government is currently examining results.

✔ In an effort to facilitate better service delivery for licenses AGA has changed a number of administrative processes and policies over the past two years including

- installing a 1-800 telephone service line
- eliminating fees and reducing reporting requirements for low-revenue bingo
- introduction of a simplified reporting process for ticket series lotteries
- faster review and approval process for lottery applications
- reduced licensing fee for liquor premises
- introduction of an IVR system to provide licensees with 24-hour access to the AGA for reporting purposes

Commitment

Undertake a comprehensive review of the compensation program for victims of institutional abuse to ensure the process is fair and upholds the rights of both the victims and the accused. (p. 22)

Action

✔ Appointed Justice Fred Kaufman in November 1999 to carry out the review.

✔ Released report in spring of 2002.

Commitment

Establish and enforce a Code of Conduct for Cabinet Ministers and senior public servants. (p. 5 and p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Introduced Code of Conduct for Cabinet Ministers, fall 1999. Passed legislation, spring 2000.
- ✔ Approved Code of Conduct for senior public servants, July 2000.
- ✔ Passed Lobbyist Registration Act, spring 2001.

Commitment

Reduce the size of government, starting with Cabinet. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Reduced Cabinet to 12 members for the first 2.5 years. Only after the budget was balanced did Cabinet return to the same size as the previous government. It is still one of the smallest Cabinets in the country. A 14-member Cabinet honours government's commitment to create a separate Department of Tourism and Culture and a new Department of Energy.
- ✔ Announced in April 2000 one of the most aggressive restructuring initiatives ever undertaken in Nova Scotia.
- ✔ Passed Bill 20 to restructure government and improve accountability throughout government. Bill 20 amends 11 acts and allows for significant structural changes, including the amalgamation of six departments to three. Bill 20 responds to recommendations of the Task Force on Fiscal Management, which called for departments of like function to be merged.
- ✔ Eliminated dozens of agencies, boards, and commissions since assuming office, including Sydney Steel Corporation Board, Halifax Dartmouth Port Development Commission, Bedford Waterfront Development Corporation, Alcohol and Gaming Authority Board, and Energy and Mineral Resources Conservation Board.

Commitment

Immediately initiate a review of all government programs with a view to eliminating those that cannot be justified on the basis of necessity, cost, and efficiency. Every single dollar spent by government must benefit Nova Scotians. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Announced an internal program analysis on September 20, 1999, to look at all government programs, their costs, their relevance today, and possible alternatives.

- ✔ Announced on October 20, 1999, that Voluntary Planning would conduct an external review of all government programs by establishing an independent fiscal task force to consult all Nova Scotians.
- ✔ *Charting the Course*, the framework of program analysis, provided government's first detailed inventory of program spending and identified what programs should be eliminated, reduced, and enhanced.
- ✔ Passed new financial accountability legislation, spring 2000, which requires the government to establish policy objectives in accordance with sound fiscal management principles.
- ✔ Continues to ensure that business planning, program management, and budgeting are fully integrated. As recommended by the Fiscal Management Task Force, Treasury and Policy Board was given a new mandate to coordinate government-wide policy development and planning and to better link implementation of government priorities with government expenditures. As well, as recommended by the Auditor General, legislation was passed that expands the scope and mandate of the Public Service Commission across the broader public sector.
- ✔ Announced in May 2002 that, for the first time, government telecommunication services would be open to competition.

Commitment

Undertake a review of services that can be more efficiently and cost-effectively provided by the private sector, while ensuring that appropriate standards and our commitment to the NSGEU on private-sector partnering are maintained. (p. 19)

Action

- ✔ Nova Scotia Resources Limited announced in June 2001 that it had completed the sale of assets in the Sable Offshore Energy Project for $355 million plus interest. Announced the sale of additional NSRL assets in December 2001.
- ✔ Announced changes to the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission in October 2000 that will create private agency stores in under-serviced areas and privately operated specialty stores. Eight new private-sector agency stores were announced in July 2001.
- ✔ Transferred the Northumberland Golf Course to the club's membership in October 2000, avoiding the need to invest millions in costly capital improvements.
- ✔ Entered into a contract with New Castle Hotels to operate the province's Signature Resorts: Keltic Lodge, Liscombe Lodge, and the Pines Resort.

Commitment
Base a significant portion of compensation for senior bureaucrats on performance. (p. 5)

Action
✔ Announced a new pay for performance system for senior government officials in July 2002.

Commitment
Cut the costs of running government by reducing out-of-province travel and non-essential spending. (p. 18)

Action
✔ Approved a new government travel policy in September 2000. Developed the policy to reduce out-of-province travel and use government resources efficiently.

Commitment
Initiate a review of all government buildings, with a view to reducing costs by eliminating surplus office space, and conduct a comprehensive energy audit. (p. 19)

Action
✔ Completed a report on surplus office space.
✔ Developing a comprehensive energy management plan for government-owned buildings.

Social Fairness, Justice, and Public Safety

Commitment

Remove the grandfather clause imposed on the Property Tax Rebate program that unfairly provides some seniors with municipal property tax relief, while denying it to others. All seniors who apply and meet program guidelines will receive property tax assistance. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Opened the program to all qualifying seniors based on a four-year phase-in.

Commitment

Work towards the elimination of the clawback provision of the National Child Tax Benefit. (p. 23)

Action

✔ Announced a new integrated child tax benefit in October 2000 that removes children from the welfare program. The new integrated benefit means the national child tax benefit is no longer clawed back for those on social assistance.

Commitment

Enhance training allowances and income forgiveness to provide greater incentives for Nova Scotians on Family Benefits to seek employment. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Announced changes in October 2000 that will significantly increase the amount of earned income that assistance recipients can keep. Recipients will now be able to keep 30 per cent of their earnings.

✔ Announced that recipients who are involved in approved training programs, including sheltered or supportive employment, are now eligible to keep up to $150 of their allowance, after considering allowable expenses such as transportation and child care.

Commitment
Work with the Disabled Persons Commission and groups that represent Nova Scotians with disabilities to expand access to accessible transportation services throughout the province. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ Allocated $500,000 in grants to support expansion of community-based transportation services in 2001–02 budget.
- ✔ Included $550,000 in 2000–03 budget.

Commitment
Refocus resources within the Department of the Environment to ensure it meet its primary responsibilities, especially inspection services. (p. 26)

Action
- ✔ Introduced a comprehensive new law in September 2000 to protect the quality of drinking water. New regulations now require that all public drinking water supplies be tested and the results reported.
- ✔ Released a discussion paper in March 2001 to be used to address deficiencies in sewage management practices.

Commitment
Enact PC legislation introduced in 1998 that provides for forfeiture of "john's" vehicles in prostitution-related offences. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ Legislation currently before the House.

Commitment
Ensure that any future appointments to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board are subject to an open, accountable selection process similar to that which governs judicial appointments. (p. 20)

Action
- ✔ Announced a new, non-partisan process for appointing members to the Utility and Review Board in June 2000, which is similar to the process used in appointing Provincial Court judges.

Commitment

Enact PC legislation introduced during minority government that provides for a sunset clause for the regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure that the regulations in place are necessary. (p. 14)

Action

✔ Passed legislation in fall 2000 that adds a sunset clause to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Commitment

Proactively target Occupational Health and Safety training and compliance audits at industries ad businesses with high accident rates to reduce injuries, leading to lower business costs and WCB premiums.

Action

✔ Announced in July 2002 that the Education and Prevention unit of the Department of Environment and Labour will move to the Workers' Compensation Board, providing for more accurate tracking and proactive efforts to reduce workplace injuries.

Commitment

Amend the Consumer Protection Act to require that, on the taking out of a mortgage, or on its renewal, the mortgage company, bank, or trust company provides the borrower with an amortization table. The table must set out clearly the amount of principal and the amount of interest in each and every payment and the amount of principal outstanding at any time, assuming payments have been made on time during the course of the mortgage. (p. 25)

Action

✔ Changed regulations under the Mortgage Brokers and Lenders Act in August 2000 so that mortgage and trust companies must include amortization tables as part of the information they provide to borrowers who take out or renew a mortgage.

✔ Amended the Consumer Protection Act and the Mortgage Brokers and Lenders Act in November 2000, which introduced the annual percentage rate as a method of calculating and disclosing the cost of borrowing; standardized the timing and content of disclosure statements that lenders must provide borrowers; required that status-of-loan updates be given to co-signers; required written approval from co-signers before additional credit can be extended to borrowers; required cost-of-credit disclosure for leases of consumer goods; specified advertising requirements specific to each type of credit arrangement; and clarified a consumer's right to prepay a non-mortgage loan without penalty.

Commitments

Amend the Consumer Creditors' Conduct Act to make it clear it applies to Internet sales and fax transmissions.

Amend the Direct Sellers' Licensing Act to make clear that it applies to both television sales and Internet sales and allow for a cooling-off period of 10 days during which the consumer may cancel the contract.

Action

✔ Changed the Consumer Protection Act in fall of 2001 to provide consumers with the right to basic information about sellers, contracts, and on-line products and services. Included in the amendments is the consumer's right to cancel contracts if on-line merchants fail to meet certain standards.

Commitment

Establish a Registry of Sex Offenders that will include the names and locations of all convicted sex offenders. (p. 22)

Action

✔ Successfully lobbied the federal government, along with several other provinces, to establish a national Sex Offender Registry. Ottawa committed to the initiative in February 2002.

Commitment

Immediately establish an independent process for setting public prosecutors' salaries and work to implement initiatives that will lead to a more positive work environment as outlined in the Kaufman Report. (p. 22)

Action

✔ Established a working group to develop an independent salary-setting mechanism for Crown attorneys. Mechanism accepted by government and the Nova Scotia Crown Attorneys Association in February 2000.

✔ Announced a new salary plan for Crown Attorneys, September 2001.

Commitment

Introduce a Volunteer Benefits Act that will provide liability, accident, and death insurance benefits to volunteer firefighters injured on the job, a $500 tax credit for volunteer firefighters, as well as a waiver for Motor Vehicle Registration fees. (p. 24)

Action

✔ Passed regulations in December 1999 providing for waiver of Motor Vehicle Registration fees.

✔ Passed An Act to Recognize the Contribution of Volunteer Firefighters and to Protect Volunteer Fire Departments in spring of 2002. The act provides for a $100,000 accidental death benefit for firefighters killed in the line of duty. It also provides volunteer fire departments with protection from seizure of material assets in claims for damages.

Commitment

Provide seniors 65 years of age and older who voluntarily participate in safe driving programs with a 50 per cent discount on Registry of Motor Vehicle fees. (p. 25)

Action

✔ Consultations were held with seniors organizations leading to a new program that provides seniors who voluntarily participate in safe driving courses with a $40 discount.

Commitment

Immediately commit to the development of a secure treatment centre for young Nova Scotians with severe emotional and behavioral problems. (p. 23)

Action

✔ Construction is under way on a secure treatment facility in Truro.

Commitment

The government will not subsidize the natural gas companies. (p. 20)

Action

✔ Government continues to support the current policy. No direct subsidies exist, nor are any planned.

Commitment
Protect retail gasoline dealers from downloading national advertising costs by major multi-national oil companies. (p. 25)

Action
✔ Protected retail gasoline dealers from downloading of national advertising costs through a regulatory amendment, October, 1999.

Commitment
Stop construction of the Correctional Forensic Facility in residential Bedford and find a suitable non-residential site following consultation. (p. 22)

Action
✔ New Correctional Forensic Facility is in Burnside.

Commitment
Government will join the effort by other provinces, including Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North West Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, New Brunswick, and Ontario, to legally challenge the federal government's gun control legislation. (p. 21)

Action
✔ Nova Scotia was granted intervener status in a case heard before the Supreme Court of Canada in February 2000.

Commitment
Through local police forces and RCMP across the province, initiate and implement a program to educate seniors on how to effectively deal with situations where they consider their safety at risk. (p. 25)

Action
✔ Launched a new Community Outreach Program. Police are distributing educational videos that offer tips on home safety.

Commitment

Respond to the concerns of many Nova Scotians, particularly seniors, who are growing increasingly concerned about living safely at home, by pursuing stiffer sentences for home invasion as outlined in legislation already introduced. (p. 24)

Action

- ✔ Justice Minister Michael Baker called on his provincial and federal counterparts at a national meeting of justice ministers in Vancouver, January 2000, to establish a new offence under the Criminal Code for home invasions. Minister repeated his calls for separate offences for home invasions at subsequent meetings, including the February 2002 meeting of Ministers of Justice.
- ✔ Released guidelines in April 2000 to assist Crown attorneys in preparing to prosecute home-invasion cases.
- ✔ Established a new community outreach program that uses an instructional video to remind seniors, youth, and women how to live safely at home.

Commitment

In keeping with our belief that "justice delayed is justice denied," look for efficiencies to help streamline our justice system. (p. 22)

Action

- ✔ Passed the Justice Administration Act, in November 1999, to improve the administration of justice by making necessary modifications to a variety of existing legislation.
- ✔ Introduced changes to the Juries Act in June 2000 to streamline and improve the process of jury selection.
- ✔ Announced in July 2000 the implementation of a new system to control the purchase of legal services from the private sector. It will ensure a coordinated approach to the procurement of legal services and will feature a tracking system to ensure that government is getting the best value for taxpayers' dollars.
- ✔ Passed an omnibus bill in November 2000 to modernize several acts including the Family Court Act, the Provincial Court Act, the Justices of the Peace Act, and the Summary Proceedings Act.
- ✔ Announced a new Justice of the Peace Centre in November 2001 to provide 24-hour, seven days a week service.
- ✔ Passed in April 2001 the Enforcement of Canadian Judgements and Decrees Act and the Liens Act as part of a national strategy to harmonize and streamline commercial law.
- ✔ Passed in April 2001 the Justice Administration Amendment (2001) Act following extensive consultation with the legal community.

- ✔ Announced in May 2001 that a Summary Offence Court would be established in Cape Breton to hear all summary offence matters. This court, which opened June 24, 2002, will divert almost 2,700 cases from the Provincial Court docket each year, giving more time for the Provincial Court to hear more serious crimes.
- ✔ Passed the Electronic Evidence Act in fall of 2001 harmonizing Nova Scotia's commercial laws with other Canadian jurisdictions.
- ✔ Passed the Costs and Fees Act allowing the courts to waive fees in special circumstances/criteria such as income levels.
- ✔ Opened new accessible courtroom and a new video guide to assist clients representing themselves before the family division of the Supreme Court.

Commitment

Ensure that front-line Community Service workers are fully briefed on all relevant changes to government policies and procedures and encourage their full participation in identifying ways to improve efficiencies and response times in dealing with clients. (p. 23)

Action

- ✔ Converted Family Benefits cases to IA Computer System, which resulted in extensive cross training of all field staff in both Family Benefits and Social Assistance Programs.
- ✔ Elicited staff input at all levels of the Social Assistance restructuring through focus groups and issues-related working groups. Over 400 staff were involved in different aspects of the last phase of redesigning the new legislation that led to welfare reform.
- ✔ Made the Department of Community Services' policy and procedure manuals available on line, August 2001, allowing for instant access to the new social assistance system.

Commitment

Instruct the Department of Community Services to work with the Nova Scotia Community College system and school boards to coordinate meaningful skills training for single parents. (p. 24)

Action

- ✔ Continues to sponsor single parents attending a full range of Nova Scotia Community College programs.

Commitment
Ensure that government services are user friendly and readily available to seniors. (p. 25)

Action
- ✔ Redesigned the *Programs for Seniors Directory* in 2001, making it easier to read and more complete.
- ✔ Completed a study through the Senior Citizen's Secretariat to determine what seniors see as barriers to literacy

Commitment
Continue 1998 legislation providing for a moratorium on VLTs and expand treatment for gambling addicts.

Action
- ✔ VLT moratorium remains in place.
- ✔ Announced phase two of a study to help problem gamblers.

Commitment
Ensure the Senior Citizens' Secretariat is given the necessary resources to carry out its mandate, with a commitment to meet regularly with representative seniors' groups to ensure the concerns of seniors are addressed. (p. 24)

Action
- ✔ Allocated funding to hire three additional staff and to open new Information Resource Library, providing a broad range of reference materials related to seniors and aging.

Commitment
Support the continuation of Community Action Programs for Children. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ The Department of Community Services supports this program through partnerships and has funding available to continue its support.

Commitment
Ensure that daycare subsidies are portable and are attached to the child, not the facility. (p. 23)

Action
- ✔ Announced funding for 190 subsidized portable seats since assuming office.

Commitment

Introduce legislation to permit municipalities to tax non-residential property owners at a higher rate than residential landowners. (p. 21)

Action

- ✔ The new Land Registration Act (2001) now requires non-residents to disclose their place of residence when they register property. This will aid in tracking the amount of land being purchased by non-residents across the province.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in spring of 2002 enabling municipalities to establish tax rates that would protect Nova Scotia residents from steep increases in property taxes as a result of increased assessments on coastal properties. The legislation is currently on hold pending further discussions with municipalities.

Commitment

In co-operation with the Trucking Association of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Provinces' Truckers Association, work to enhance highway safety and education. (p. 26)

Action

- ✔ Approved new regulations in December 1999 to direct funds paid to the Workers Compensation Board Accident Fund into programs that support safety training initiatives carried out by Nova Scotia's trucking industry.
- ✔ Announced Stolen and Wrecked Vehicle Program in June 2000 to prevent badly damaged vehicles from returning to the roads.
- ✔ Introduced legislation in April 2001 to amend the Public Highways Act. Amendments will improve sign directions and protect controlled-access highways from excessive advertising. Also, amendments to the Motor Vehicle Act allow for stiffer penalties both for failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and for passing a stopped school bus with flashing lights.
- ✔ Announced standards in April 2001 to improve safety during highway construction. For example, workers must review planning checklists before starting work.
- ✔ Announced in May 2001 that school zone signs would change colour to better protect students in school zones.
- ✔ Established new performance standards, including province-wide winter service levels, and purchased new equipment, including high-tech sensors, in November 2001 to enhance public safety.
- ✔ Announced new graduated fine structure for speeding and other motor vehicle infractions.